

MINUTES

**Quarterly Meeting of the
MISSOURI VETERANS COMMISSION
Held, pursuant to notice
Wednesday, April 19, 2006 — 10:00 AM
State Veterans Home – St. James
620 N. Jefferson,
St. James, Missouri**

I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance
- B. Roll Call
In attendance: **Chairman Carson Ross; Vice Chairman Joe Frank; Member Lee Kling; Member Bernadette Miller; Member General Arvid West**
- C. Introductions
Guests and staff present.
 - 1. Guest: **Stephen Gaither**, Public Relations, VA Medical Center Columbia; **Wil Dailey**, VFW, VVA; **Bill Helton**, VVA; **Jack Matthews**, President MVC Foundation, Inc.; **Lynn Dorrell**, Adjutant, American Legion; **Jim Ringland**, Special Forces; **Carl Hargus**, Special Forces, Florissant Veterans Commission; **Richard Heigert**, President MAVO; **James Whitfield**, Western Area Coordinator, MO Military Funeral Honors Program; **Col. Wayne Medley**, MO Military Funeral Honors Program; **James Dulany**, Retired MVC; **Emmett Fairfax**, Past Chairman MVC; **Glen Struchtemeyer**, Director St. Louis VA Medical Center; **George Newell**, Vice Chair MAVO; **Bill Rupp**, Marine Corps League; **James Holmes**, VFW; **Brian Jamison**, Deputy Director, Department Public Safety; **Dan Ross**, Chief Information Officer, Office of Administration
 - 2. Staff: **Ronald Taylor**, Executive Director; **Jill Talken**, Executive Secretary; **Hal Dulle**, Deputy Director; **Jerry Quigley**, Director Jacksonville Cemetery; **Anne Payne**, Superintendent of Homes; **Rebecca Bradley**, Minority Veterans Benefits Coordinator; **Tim Norton**, Director of Planning and Property Management; **Pat Rowe Kerr**, Veterans Ombudsman; **Patty Faenger**, Administrator, St. James Veterans Home; **Bob Harvey**, Service to Veterans Program; **Julie Miller**, Chief Accountant; **Bonnie McNeill-Boyt**, Training Technician; **Jill Drennen**, Director Information Systems; **Viviane Rains**, Assistant Administrator, St. James Home;
- D. Approval of January 24, 2006 Commission Meeting Minutes.
Commissioner Frank made a motion to accept the minutes and

Commissioner West seconded the motion. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as recorded.

Commissioner Ross welcomed S. Lee Kling, recently appointed Commissioner to the meeting.

II. OLD BUSINESS:

Management Report: Executive Director Comments: Ronald Taylor

Commission Update – Ronald Taylor reported that the budget passed the House which includes additional overtime money, however, the Senate is presently debating on the Senate Floor. Mr. Taylor noted items that will go to conference are: the Senate added \$3.7 million for the Homes Program for overtime which was not in the House version; 8.50 FTE added to Homes Program at a cost of \$300,000 also added by the Senate and not included in the House version; the House added 4 FTE for the STV Program which the Senate took out, and finally the one position for the Fort Leonard Cemetery was removed by the Senate.

The Commission has been notified that Tammy Pew, LPN III within the Missouri Veterans Commission, Cameron Veterans Home was chosen to receive the Governor's Award for Valor and will be recognized at the Missouri State Employee Recognition Day on May 5th on the South lawn of the Capitol.

Mr. Taylor reported to the Commissioners that a private organization in the state of Missouri making presentations to veterans or widows of veterans and telling them that if they sign a contract the organization will prepare all the paper work necessary to obtain VA benefits. If the veteran decides later to cancel the contract the firm has reportedly threatened to sue them. The firm is being investigated by IG/VA and the Attorney General's Office has been made aware of the organization. Mr. Taylor stated this case may be similar to Swan Lake in that what they are doing may not be technically illegal but services can be done free by service organizations or the Commission. The Commission will note any cases where veterans are alleging that there were very questionable practices and if we can verify this we can turn over to the Attorney General's Office. He recommended the Commission may want to contact MAVO, VFW and American Legion to run article in newsletters of the free service offered by the Service Organizations and the Commission. Chairman Ross asked that MAVO work with the Commission on this issue.

Missouri Veterans Homes: Anne Payne, Superintendent of Homes

Homes Program – (Handout) Anne Payne reported to the Commissioners effective February 28, 2006 the average daily census shows 1,142 veterans currently being served in the Homes and now over 1,000 veterans are on waiting list. A total of over \$425,000 has been donated to the Assistance Leagues which has allowed the Homes to purchase items such as a handicap accessible bus. She stated that over 95,000 volunteer hours have been reported in the seven Homes providing activities and other services to the veterans. Ms. Payne noted the Homes Program is very proud of the community support given to the Homes.

Ms. Payne provided a copy of the GAO report to the Commissioners that were released in January 2006 talking about VA trend in long term care. The federal VA currently provides or pays for veterans' care in three different nursing home care settings; in FY 2005 the VA spent 3.2 billion dollars providing long term care for veterans. The three types of care are: VA-operated nursing homes, privately owned nursing homes in the community from which VA purchases services, and state veterans' nursing homes (119 total). The report shows the break out of how the 3.2 billion dollars are divided; the VA operated homes took care of 35 % of the veterans at a cost of 77% of the 3.2 billion dollars. The state veterans homes took care of over half, 52% of the veterans at 12% of the cost. The community nursing homes took care of 13% at 11% of the 3.2 billion dollars. The challenges VA faced last year was to change the policy that would impact the level of per diem reimbursement going to our Homes to support our care. Ms. Payne noted that she has worked with the National Association of State Veterans Homes and one of their legislative initiatives is to get a statute passed that would require the VA to discuss these proposed policies changes with the National Association of State Veterans Homes before they make recommendations for cutting budget for the Homes. She reported that when MVC did impact studies last year when VA was proposing a per diem policy change MVC discovered about 70% of our veterans we currently service in our Homes would no longer be eligible under the new criteria that VA was proposing. She noted MVC is continuing to work as a state with the national organization and being very active to defend what we have in our state homes. Ms. Payne stated that a Legislative Officer for the Association is working very closely with congress members in making sure that the Homes Program has federal support.

Ms. Payne reported that six of the seven Missouri Veterans Homes have received their annual federal regulatory surveys and were deficiency free once again. The Veterans Home in Cape Girardeau will be surveyed in June.

Ms. Payne discussed the FY07 Missouri Veterans Commission Home Program Business Plan with the Commissioners. She noted five operational areas that the Homes Program will be paying close attention to this next fiscal year: Marketing, Operations, Finance, Community/Legislative Affairs and Risk Management. Each facility will be asked to create their own facility level plan that dovetail into the central plan and to note any specific challenges that they face so that there is a very organized and focused method of reaching our goals of continuing quality operation.

Ms Payne shared with the Commissioners a letter from Representative David Day, District 148 regarding Veterans Homes in Missouri. Representative Day recently attended an event at Ft. Leonard Wood where Mr. Dannion Brinkley, co-founder of The Twilight Brigade/Compassion in Action (CIA) was guest speaker; Mr. Brinkley informed Representative Day about a visit he had made that day to the Veterans Home in St. James and stated that he has visited over 200 Veteran's Home while working with his organizations and without a doubt, the St. James Veterans Home was by far the best he has ever seen. The comment Mr. Brinkley made was "St. James is the example of what all the others should strive to be". Chairman Ross stated that he spoke to Representative Day shortly after the letter was written and asked that Representative Day share the letter with other legislators that have MVC facilities in their districts so that they will understand what they have in their district.

Ms. Payne reported to the Commissioners that the Homes Program is focusing on efficiency and effectiveness and during the months of November through February the Homes saved the state \$480,000 through the use of federal contracts.

Vice Chairman Frank advised that he met with Dr. Thomas, Chief Spinal Cord at Jefferson Barracks VA Medical Center and Dr. Thomas is doing research on Multiple Sclerosis & Spinal Cord Injuries. Mr. Frank asked the Homes Program to prepare a report of the number of residents in MVC's seven homes that are diagnosed for Multiple Sclerosis or Spinal Cord Injuries. Ms. Payne noted that there are a total of 19 residents with MS and 12 residents with Spinal Cord Injuries. Vice Chairman Frank stated that he believes Dr. Thomas can be an asset to the Commission and that Dr. Thomas may contact the Commission at a later date regarding this matter. Mr. Frank also noted that the Commission may want to consider getting to know who the residents are. Chairman Ross asked Ms. Payne to prepare a report identifying diagnosis of residents for future meetings.

Construction Update: Tim Norton, Director of Planning and Property Management

Construction Update – (Handouts) Tim Norton distributed to the Commissioners a construction update report.

Ft. Leonard Wood Veterans Cemetery: April 10th Ft. Leonard Wood signed over land for a Veterans Cemetery. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has completed the studies required to transfer the property to the Missouri Veterans Commission/State of Missouri. Currently proceeding to work through the budget process to secure state funds for design and bidding of this project. It is anticipated having state funds by July 1, 2006 and beginning design within a short period after securing these funds. During the design MVC will meet with VA to discuss the design and will also submit plans and specifications to VA for their review. This process will take approximately one year, with design being completed around the time when federal funds will be available for construction (estimated around November 2007).

Warrensburg and Cameron Veterans Homes hot water upgrades project will include two hot water heaters and re-routing of piping. Cameron's project has been awarded and scheduled for completion October 25, 2006. Warrensburg was awarded with a completion date October 6, 2006.

Cape Girardeau Veterans Home, HAVC project consist of upgrading the heating, air conditioning and ventilating system, replacing flooring, renovating and expanding the kitchen, adding a solarium, dementia dining/activity room and painting resident rooms. The main kitchen, serving area, dining room and A-300 and 100 halls has been completed and turned over to the facility. Estimated completion is November 2006.

Springfield Veterans Cemetery, columbarium wall project was completed in January 2006. To date 16 new interments have taken place in the new columbarium wall. The original columbarium wall is full.

Mexico Veterans Home, floor replacement design; received 95% design review plans and specifications and final design should be completed, with the project out for bid in late spring of 2006. Construction contract will be approximately 6 months, exact amount of time in contract should be determined within the next few months.

Cape Girardeau Veterans Home, roof replacement; 95% design development of this project has been sent to VA and documents will be finalized as soon as they return comments. Project should take approximately 5 to 6 months once construction has begun.

Cameron parking design of an additional 27 parking spaces is nearing completion pre-bid meeting should be scheduled within the next few weeks. Project should take approximately 120 days, once construction has begun.

St. Louis Veterans Home: Currently designing electrical upgrades that include adding various kitchen equipment to emergency generator, adding additional electrical outlets in resident rooms and nurse stations that are connected to emergency generator and a quick connection for a portable generator that will be able to carry chillers for cooling should a power outage occur during hot weather. MVC has secured the CD set of drawings on this project and anticipate having final plans and specifications within the next couple of months.

St. Louis Veterans Home: Design is complete to connect several downspouts to storm drains. A pre-bid meeting is scheduled for April 13, 2006.

St. Louis Veterans Home: On April 2, 2006 lightning struck the emergency generator causing extensive damage. MVC is currently contacting the manufacturer to get a cost estimate to recondition. A portable unit is currently being used.

Springfield Veterans Cemetery requires roof replacement on the committal shelter and new ridge cap on the administration building due to storm damage that occurred on March 12, 2006. Another contract has been awarded to replace the soffit, repair and replace gutter, downspouts and fascia on the administration building.

Mr. Norton explained to the Commission the federal matching grant process for the Homes and Cemeteries. For the Homes the Commission is eligible to receive up to a 65% matching grant for projects \$400,000 or greater and up to 100% matching grant for the Cemeteries. Funds are currently available for all current projects mentioned.

Service to Veterans Program: Ronald Taylor, Executive Director

Service to Veterans – (Handout) Ron Taylor reported that over 9,500 veterans and or families of veterans have been served at Veterans Benefits Supermarkets and over 5,000 calls have been made to the toll free number. A Supermarket was held recently in Palmyra with only 20 veterans registering at the event. A Supermarket is scheduled for April 29th at the American Legion in Warrensburg and DAV Veterans Appreciation Day will be held in Kirksville on April 28th. A total of 6 to 8 Supermarkets have been planned for this year. Mr. Taylor noted that they are at looking developing new strategies on getting the word out.

Ron Taylor distributed to the Commissioners information regarding the Veterans Disability Benefits Commission 2006 site visit. A town hall meeting will be held on May 10th in St. Louis. The goals of the Commission's site visits are to allow the Commissioners the opportunity to tour local VA and DOD facilities and to examine the processes in place which assist disabled veterans and service members, and survivors in their efforts to obtain their benefits; and to present these individuals and the general public with an opportunity to learn about the work of the Commission and to offer comments in face-to-face forums. Mr. Taylor advised that the Commission will ask for an opportunity to speak at the event and or provide written testimony. Commissioner Kling will try to be available to attend the event.

Chairman Ross reported that he recently attended town hall meeting discussions in DC & Los Angeles with veteran organizations to get the word out. Commissioner West suggested that maybe the Supermarkets should be modified to fit the needs of the Guard and Reservists. Mr. Taylor advised the Commission currently participates in Benefits Briefings with the Missouri National Guard, however, he stated that the Commission is looking at ways to reach the families of the members prior to the member returning home. The Commission is working the Missouri National Guard in developing a Memorandum of Agreement and Pat Rowe Kerr is planning to attend the National Guard Conference in Kansas City. He also stated that he and Hal Dulle have been speaking with Colonel James Allison with the Missouri National Guard in getting their support. Ron Taylor and Stan Baughn are also looking at conducting mini-markets which will be targeted to particular types of veterans and their needs. James Whitfield, Western Area Coordinator, MO Military Funeral Honors Program noted that the Warrensburg Veterans Benefits Fair is working with the Guard and Whiteman Air Force Base in getting the word out to the 3,500 veterans located in Johnson County and joining counties. Commissioner Kling suggested that the Supermarkets have key figures speak at the event to increase attendance.

Rebecca Bradley, Minority Veterans Benefits Coordinator in Kansas City has been with the Commission for two months increasing awareness to minority veterans. Ms. Bradley reported that she has been distributing Veterans Benefits Awareness brochures out, maintaining contact with the Veteran Service Officers in Kansas City, and she recently spoke on a radio talk show regarding a Job/Resource Fair held the Kansas City area. Ms. Bradley previously worked for the Missouri Career Center in Kansas City.

Hal Dulle noted that the Commission has been discussing with MAVO regarding increasing their participation in the outreach concept across the state to assist with small job fairs and other methods of reaching veterans.

Cemeteries Update: Jerry Quigley, Director Jacksonville Cemetery

Cemetery Program – (Handouts) Jerry Quigley reported to the Commissioners the Cemetery Program has conducted a total of 3,669 interments as of April 4th and 12, 810 pre-certifications. He noted that the cemeteries are running about a 35% cremation rate and a little higher in Springfield.

In March Jerry Quigley and Ken Swearengen attended the NCA Director School in St. Louis for a week and learned that Missouri is far ahead of other states as far as programs and database. Commissioner Miller asked that due to Springfield Cemetery's average burials of 3 to 4 per day whether they have the same number of staff as the other four state cemeteries. Mr. Quigley responded that Springfield has additional staff. Mr. Taylor stated that staff is based on the National Cemetery Administration's rough formula of number of burials, number of headstones to maintain plus acreage. In the next couple of years the Springfield Cemetery will have reached enough headstones along with their acreage and number of burials to ask for another staff member. The opening of the Ft. Leonard Wood Cemetery should not have much affect on the numbers at Springfield.

VSO Grants: Hal Dulle, Deputy Director

VSO Grant Program- Hal Dulle reported the Commission has granted all of the \$750,000 appropriated for matching grants for FY2006. The Commission is in the process of meeting with the service organizations to talk about more utilizing MVC's service officers with their service officers to get more affect on outreach. The Service Organizations testified before the House and Senate Appropriations Committee regarding the STV matching grant program. Mr. Dulle stated the house appropriated an additional \$250,000 for grant money, however, the Senate took that out because of no legislation authorizing to spend the additional monies, since then Representative Avery has introduced HB1845 located on the house calendar which allows the Missouri Veterans Commission to issue \$1 million annually in matching grants for veterans' service officer programs. If HB1845 passes this year then possibly next year the veterans' organizations can go back and ask for the additional \$250,000. Mr. Dulle explained one main reason for asking for increased funds is because of the tremendous need for transportation for veterans to the VA hospital, clinics or the Homes.

Outreach: Pat Rowe Kerr, Veterans Ombudsman

Outreach – (Handouts) Pat Rowe Kerr distributed a letter from Representative Jack Jackson, Chairman Veterans Committee concerning significant veteran legislation he sponsors that are currently on the House Floor for debate.

Pat Rowe-Kerr announced that the sixth “Support the Troops” event has been planned for May 8th on the South lawn of the Capitol at 6:00 p.m. Lt. Governor Peter Kinder, Senator Harry Kennedy and Representative Jack Jackson will be guest speakers at the event.

Ms. Kerr reported that intense focus has been directed toward support of the Missouri Military Family Fund. She stated the Commission has worked to complete the policy development of the Program and will also be working to accept the applications from the Guard and Reserves families who are within 3 months of their return from deployment or still on deployment who suffering financial constraints.

Mr. Kerr explained Vet PAC – working to educate amongst state agencies the needs of the veterans as well as the programs available in other agencies to ascertain that all agency programs are available to veterans of all eras and also her appointment to Traumatic Brain Injury Council. The Commission has partnership with the Department of Health and Senior Services Brain Injury.

She reported that Representative Jack Jackson has been instrumental in the support of resource, financial and otherwise for the GWOT members and their families. Over \$34,000 was raised in 3 weeks for the Dietiker family of Cape Girardeau due to the inability to gain employment upon return from Iraq, and the wife’s 4th stage cancer, and two daughters’ illness. Also a similar fundraising effort is underway for assisting a St. Joseph family.

III. NEW BUSINESS:

Lynn Dorrell, State Adjutant, American Legion expressed his concerns with advertising he has seen in Jefferson City area regarding the tax check-off however not across the state. Ms. Kerr advised that a total of 18 billboards are located across the state and 300 cable networks with PSA’s from the Lt. Governor are being aired. All these advertising efforts are done with donated dollars.

Col. Wayne Medley, Missouri Military Funeral Honors Program reported that the MMFH Program has coordinated 54,207 services which are averaging around 793 services per month over the past three months. They continue to get state and federal funding. He stated they are currently in the process of moving several state personnel to active duty special work which means they will be paid full military pay and allowance for doing services. The Program has received \$400,000 this year and hopes to increase to \$800,000 for next year.

He stated most all team members have now received the ceremonial dress blue uniforms.

Colonel Medley advised that the Moberly site has relocated to Macon in order to help support the entire Northeast corner of the state better.

James Whitfield has been named the Western Area Supervisor.

Rich Heigert, Chairman MAVO invited everyone to attend the MAVO meeting today at 1:30 p.m. Vice Chairman Frank commended Rich Heigert and MAVO for their outstanding work.

Steven Gaither, Public Relations, VA Medical Center Columbia distributed brochure on Seamless Transition Program to the Commissioners. He noted it is the VA's duty and privilege to provide veterans with the best available care. The VA has set up special program designed to meet the specific needs of veterans returning from operation Iraq Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom call the Seamless Transition Program. He noted it is the VA's goal to make sure these veterans receive the highest quality of care in a timely manner. He also distributed the 2005 Annual Report for Harry S. Truman Memorial Veterans Hospital. He noted they are busy taking care of 30,000 Mid-Missouri veterans in Columbia.

Glen Struchtemeyer, Director St. Louis VA Medical Center thanked the Commissioners for the opportunity to use the St. Louis Veterans Home for the VA Outpatient Clinic. They are currently looking at ways to expand that program. He stated nationally the VA has funded mental health providers for all of the community based clinics in St. Louis. He also reported that the St. Louis VA Medical Center has been identified as a Level II for traumatic brain injuries. They have received expanded funds for mental health programs at the Jefferson Barracks Hospital and for renovation of Jefferson Barracks Hospital and expansion of the Cemetery. He also stated that the John Cochran Facility will hopefully be building a parking garage next fall.

Legislative Report – Hal Dulle

HB978 – (J. Smith) Establishes the Vietnam War Medallion Program. Every veteran who honorably served during this war is entitled to receive a Vietnam War medallion, medal, and a certificate of appreciation as long as the veteran is or was a legal resident of Missouri when he or she entered or was discharged from military service or at the time of his or her death. The Adjutant General will administer the program and the Commission will solicit designs and receive applications.

HB1141 – (J. Jackson) Changes the distribution of some of the proceeds in the Gaming Commission Fund. The first \$500,000 will continue to be appropriated on a per-capita basis to certain cities and counties that have demonstrated a need for funding community neighborhood organization programs for the homeless and to deter gang-related violence and crimes. The remaining money in the fund would reallocate 25% of gaming funds to Veterans' Commission Capital Improvement Trust Fund. Chairman Ross suggested that perhaps MAVO could communicate with Representative Jack Jackson in looking at another opportunity of a bill that this could be attached to or amended to.

Hal Dulle introduced Brian Jamison, Deputy Director Department of Public Safety and Dan Ross, Director Information Technology, Office of Administration. Mr. Jamison addressed the Commissioners regarding the statewide IT Consolidation project. Mr. Jamison explained that the IT Consolidation within the Department of Public Safety will allow them to combine resources and leverage out the IT request based on needs for the department. This will also leverage out other departments IT staffing needs and provide assistance whenever possible. He reported the departments dedicated funding will not be affected by the consolidation; however a very small amount of non-dedicated money will be combined with the department where they can then prioritize based upon IT needs. Mr. Ross stated the consolidation will take effect June 16, 2006 where 200 IT staff will become part of Information Technology, Office of Administration. Agencies excluded from the consolidation include MoDOT and Conservation.

Ron Taylor advised that he and Hal Dulle will be working with Dan Ross in helping MVC evaluate the MONETTE System, a management system for the Homes Program.

Chairman Ross advised that he wrote and thanked Carl Niewoehner, past Chairman for his continued dedication and commitment to voice for Missouri's veterans. Mr. Niewoehner has written several articles to the Editor of the Columbia Tribune concerning veterans' issues.

Chairman Ross presented Emmett Fairfax, past Chairman with a plaque of appreciation for his exemplary service and superior leadership to the State of Missouri and its Veterans.

Will Dailey, Veteran Service Officer, VFW advised the Commissioners that he has previously chaired the Springfield Veterans Benefits Supermarket and suggest the Commission consider renaming these events to Veterans Benefits Resource Fairs so that they are not so confusing to veterans.

Rich Heigert, Chairman MAVO reported that he participated in the groundbreaking ceremony for the VA Clinic in Farmington. He noted this is the Nations first VA clinic fully owned and maintained by an American Legion post and will be dedicated in October, 2006. He reported that on Sunday, April 23rd the National Commander for the American Legion will be in visiting Southeast Missouri. His agenda includes site visits to the Cape Girardeau Veterans Home, Bloomfield Veterans Cemetery and VA Medical Center in Poplar Bluff. Also on Wednesday, April 26th the VFW National Commander will be in Caruthersville at a dinner for both guest.

Jim Ringland, Special Forces and Carl Hargus, Special Forces Florissant Veterans Commission, expressed their concerns regarding the St. Louis VA Regional Office lack of representation at the Commission meetings. Chairman Ross advised that the Commission does invite them to attend the meetings and he will follow up on this matter. Glen Struchtemeyer, Director St. Louis VA Medical Center clarified that Kim Graves, Director St. Louis Regional Office has been detailed to Washington and possibly will be gone for the remainder of the year. Mr. Struchtemeyer will notify the St. Louis Regional Office also.

Discussion was held regarding possible future CBOC sites (Jefferson City, Sullivan, and Branson) that were previously released from the CARES process. Steven Gaither explained due to concerns on dollars and budget the CBOC's have been postponed.

Chairman Ross shared a copy of a letter wrote to Sean Allison, Summit Publications thanking him for allowing the Missouri Veterans Commission to place a full page colored ad in the Blue springs Summit Publications Telephone Directory free of charge. Mr. Ross requested that the Commission work other advertising companies and utilize free advertising.

Chairman Ross shared with the Commissioners a letter received from Ron Taylor, Executive Director dated April 19th that effective May 31st, 2006 Mr. Taylor will be officially retiring from the Missouri Veterans Commission. Mr. Taylor thanked the Commissioners for their support he

has received while working for the Commission the past 22 years (the last four as Executive Director).

Vice Chairman Frank informed that on April 10th the Commission attended the land transfer signing ceremony held at Ft. Leonard Wood. General Castro and U.S. Congressman Ike Skelton were both in attendance at the event. Ft. Leonard Wood transferred 227 acres to the State of Missouri for the purpose of a State Veterans Cemetery. Plans for groundbreaking should take place sometime in 2008 with the official opening to happening sometime in 2009.

NEXT MEETING

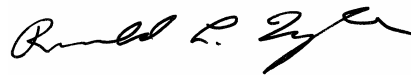
The next Commission meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 11, 2006 at 10:00 a.m. at the State Veterans Cemetery Higginsville.

The Commission closed the meeting to conduct an executive session for the purpose to discuss personnel matters pursuant to Section 610.021, Subsection (3) RSMo.

The meeting was reopened.

Chairman Ross announced at the open committee meeting by unanimous vote of the Commissioners, Hal Dulle has been named Acting Executive Director effective May 15, 2006 until the replacement for Ron Taylor has been named.

With no further business before the Commission the meeting was adjourned.



Ronald L. Taylor, Secretary